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Inclusion of qualifications in NQFs – experiences from different countries in the world

NQF-In Project Final Conference
Warsaw, Poland
5-6 June 2018

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- Experiences from countries participating in:
 - the “horizontal comparison” project
 - The EQF alignment project
 - The CAEP project
- Some remarks

Introduction

- Presentation concerns inclusion of formal qualifications (state regulated?) into NQFs only
- Not pretending to be a regular comparative analysis
 - Rather collection of experiences
 - With some summing up statements in the end

Horizontal comparison (HC) objectives

(AG32-3 note)

- ❑ The general aim of the pilot project was to further improve the way EQF levelling takes place, building on national experiences;
- ❑ The specific aim of the pilot was to fine-tune and test a methodology for the comparison of levelling decisions and sharing experiences on existing strengths and weaknesses;
- ❑ The results should inform and support future levelling decisions at national level, and remain the property of these countries.
- ❑ The experiences from the pilot should inform and orient future ‘horizontal comparisons’;
- ❑ ‘Horizontal comparisons’ addressed the consistency of the referencing of national qualifications;
- ❑ HC also provided information on detail and way of describing learning outcomes across different countries.

The Horizontal Comparison working team composition:

- Cedefop, Commission and EQF/AG experts

- and experts from the following countries:

 - Hungary

 - Italy

 - Latvia

 - Norway

 - Poland (coordinator)

 - Sweden

 - Scotland

Choice of qualifications:

The two qualifications were chosen
for analysis:

- * CNC operator
- * Mechanical engineer

And the “hotel receptionist”
(at the PLA in Warsaw)

Fiche for horizontal comparisons

Country:	Country A	Country B	Country ...	Results of the horizontal comparison of qualifications and their levelling – similarities and differences
Group members:				
Title of qualification (bilingual) ¹ :				
Scope of qualification ² :				
Context information³. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access rights; • Purpose of the qualification in education; • Purpose of the qualification at the labour market; • Reference to occupational context; • International standards; • Recognition practice; • Validation practices; • Validation of informal and non-formal learning; • Quality assurance; • Other relevant. 				
Organization of learning outcomes ⁴				
Learning outcomes ⁵ :				
Analysis of learning outcomes ⁶ :				
Basis of levelling ⁷				
Level of NQF/EQF ⁸				
Conclusions of the qualification horizontal comparison between countries				
Recommendations (overall, per country, to EQF AG)				

Importance of “context information”

- “additional questions/answers” contained the description of qualifications registration/ inclusion /basis for levelling
- Essential differences?
 - The Swedish case
 - The Italian case
 - The Polish ca

General conclusion of the project

The national approaches to describing qualifications show great diversity of qualifications descriptions, levelling etc. ..

- Despite these differences, the analyses presented in the report show that tools which help to submit, present and organise information on similar qualifications can be developed.
- The fiche can be used as a common tool to determine the comparability of qualifications

There are three broad areas that need to be included in comparisons of qualifications.

- **Learning outcomes** - the national descriptions of learning outcomes differ as regards length, detail and conceptual approach **but** is possible to identify the common “core” of their description which allows qualifications to be compared.
- **Information on the context of qualifications** is necessary to understand the variability of information and approaches at the national level.
- The **methods of levelling** differ and build on different principles and practises **but** the core elements identified as relation between learning outcomes and level descriptors and the quality assurance of the process of levelling.

Lessons learnt

1. the national context matters.
2. there is significant diversity of national approaches to describing and levelling qualifications. This diversity is an important part of the European qualifications landscape and should be maintained.
3. The horizontal comparisons exercise confirmed that the “bottom-up”, peer work based approach adopted in the pilot project gives promising results

The EQF – other countries – alignment project

- Conducted by the AG in 2014-2015
- Concerning Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong national qualification frameworks
 - Comparability study of NQFs and EQF – joint reports
- Principles for report methodology (Hog Kong) – based on referencing criteria
 - Principle 1: The roles and responsibilities of the EDB, the QFS, the HKCAAVQ in relation to the HKQF and the corresponding authorities for the EQF are clear and transparent
 - Principle 2: Comparison of the HKQF and the EQF demonstrates matching between the levels of the two frameworks (??)
 - Principle 3: The HKQF and the EQF are based on learning outcomes
 - Principle 4: The policies and processes for the inclusion of qualifications on the HKQF and the European national frameworks referenced to the EQF are clear and transparent
 - Principle 5: Both qualifications frameworks are underpinned by quality assurance and are consistent with international quality assurance principles

Lessons learnt

- EQF as a “meta-framework”
 - Referencing criteria can work
- NQFs as a basis for inclusion of qualifications
- Context matters
- Do not look for identity and/or one model of inclusion/levelling
 - Transparency
 - Clear identification of methods

European Union - Central Asia Education Platform (CAEP) project

- Conducted from 2012
- Run by GOPA
- Partners:
 - EU: Germany, Latvia, Poland, Romania ...
 - CA: Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
- Objectives:
 - to contribute to the adaptation of the education systems of Central Asia states to the needs of the globalized world and to cooperate with major international partners and donors supporting educational programmes and institutions,
 - to support all levels of education, including VET and HE, staff and student mobility for instance under the Erasmus+ programme, and on a bilateral basis.

European Union - Central Asia Education Platform (CAEP) project (2)

- Main area of cooperation for the going on project stage: quality assurance and qualification frameworks
- Activities:
 - Exchanging experiences – PLAs, workshops
 - Evaluation (discussion on?) of emerging systems – mostly NQFs
 - Commenting documents
 - e.g. the Kazakhstan self-certification report)
 - The others

European Union - Central Asia Education Platform (CAEP) project (3)

- Lessons learnt:
 - Historical context matters as well as the Eu assistance programmes
 - Very similar approach to the role of state in NQFs systems of qualification inclusion
 - centralized state owned “registers”
 - But more different approaches to quality assurance systems (e.g. Kazakhstan independent QA agency)
 - Again:
 - Do not look for one model of qualifications inclusion into the NQF in spite of similarities
 - Transparency
 - Changes going on permanently

Summing up?

- The NQF-in project and presented 3 projects findings
 - Similar or different?
- Looking for one (the best) model of qualifications inclusion?
 - Or accepting (supporting) diversity?
- Looking for good practices?
- Promoting transparency?
- Building trust and understanding?

Thank you for your attention!